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DEPT FOR NEA/RA JSCOVITCH

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [AL](#) [XF](#) [AG](#)
SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE DEMARCHE: ALGERIA SUPPORTS EGYPT'S
EFFORTS, URGES END TO HUMANITARIAN "CATASTROPHE"

REF: STATE 3120

Classified By: DCM Thomas F. Daughton; reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (C) The Ambassador delivered reftel demarche January 14 to MFA Director General for Arab Affairs Abdelhamid Bouzaher, who said that Algeria was in accord in principle with our points on Gaza. He said Algeria supported the UNSCR, and absolutely supported Egypt's efforts. But, he said, the situation in Gaza was a "catastrophe," and he stressed that normal diplomatic language failed to describe it. What was essential, according to Bouzaher, was to stop the killing, secure the withdrawal of Israeli forces, lift the blockade, open the crossings, and address the urgent humanitarian crisis. Every minute that passed was important, he emphasized, calling the situation a massacre. He noted that casualty figures were nearing 1000 dead and over 4000 wounded; therefore, stopping the violence immediately must come first. Frontier arrangements, international forces, or whatever else the negotiations produced, he argued, would come next.

12. (C) Bouzaher said the Egyptians had much to do, and that the task would not be easy. "Your great country," he said, "must continue to work as the guardian of international security and the peace process. You must exert pressure on Israel to stop the killing and lift the blockade. This will help a lot."

13. (C) Press reports indicate that Algeria will send a delegation to Doha for the January 16 meeting, and sources at the MFA and elsewhere told us that FM Medelci and former Prime Minister and FLN party chief Abdelaziz Belkhadem may attend. Bouzaher is expected to attend as well.
PEARCE